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February 4, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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THE GERMAN PRUNE MARKET SITUATION

The Hamburg prune market late in January was rather quiet, due largely to the high quotations on California stock, according to a cable received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Loyd V. Steere, the American Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. The Yugoslav campaign is now practically finished. Hamburg prices are slightly higher on the small sizes and slightly lower on the large sizes. Prices on January 28 ranged from $5.38 to $5.58 per 100 pounds on 80/85's and from $4.30 to $4.38 on 95/100's as compared with a range on January 12 of from $5.59 to $5.75 on 80/85's and from $4.15 to $4.23 on 95/100's.

Imports of prunes, including removals from the Hamburg warehouses for distribution in Germany, during the four months September 1 to December 31, totaled 33,362,000 pounds as against 12,665,000 pounds during the corresponding period last season. The United States supplied 82 per cent of the imports thus far this season and Yugoslavia 16 per cent. Hamburg stocks on January 15 totaled 5,147 short tons as follows: California 4,517 tons, Oregon 82 tons, Bosnian 509 tons and Rumanian 39 tons. Stocks on the corresponding date in 1928 totaled 4,488 short tons as folllws: California 3,363 tons, Oregon 913 tons, and Bosnian 212 tons.

PRUNES: Imports into Germany, by months, September 1927 to December 1928

Year and month	United States	Yugoslavia	Total imports
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
1927-28			
September	1,180	144	1,419
October	1,385	225	1,637
November	1,418	1,300	2,993
December	4,715	1,700	6,606
Total for four months	8,698	3,369	12,655
January	11,140	3,075	14,558
February	5,846	1,451	7,587
March	4,524	1,534	6,413
April	3,043	1,396	4,518
May	2,369	986	3,479
June	4,738	744	5,539
July	5,288	1,959	7,306
August	11,718	802	12,559
1928-29			
September	4,656	1,145	5,843
October	11,212	435	11,742
November	2,636	1,739	4,577
December a/	8,800	2,100	11,200
Total for four months	27,304	5,419	33,362

Source: Monatliche Nachweise über den Auswärtigen Handel Deutschlands.
a/ Preliminary figures received by cable.

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February 13, 1929.

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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PROBLEMS IN THE YUGOSLAV PRUNE INDUSTRY

One of the most important problems confronting the prune growers in Yugoslavia at the present time is that of devising a satisfactory method of spraying the trees, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Milton J. Newhouse, Consulting Specialist of the Bureau, who is now in Europe investigating the production and marketing of prunes. The difficulty in Yugoslavia arises from the fact that prune trees in that country have been allowed to grow up somewhat along the lines of the "eucalyptus" tree in California. As a result it is practically impossible even under the best of conditions to reach the trees. The situation is made more difficult by the fact that the use of modern spraying machinery is practically unknown and the knowledge of spraying materials is very limited.

The Yugoslav planting methods account for the development of this problem, states Mr. Newhouse. Since the land holdings of the peasant usually range from 12 to 17 acres he has made it a point to crowd as many prune trees as possible on the section of his holding set aside for that purpose. The distances between trees on an average will range from 12 to 15 feet. The trees are headed in the nursery at from seven to eight feet from the ground and no pruning is practiced once the tree has been planted. As a result the trees struggle upward for sunlight. Until the past year the Yugoslav peasant has devoted practically no thought to the matter of spraying, although agricultural schools and agricultural inspectors have been attempting to convince him of the necessity for such action for some time. As a result of the indifference of the peasants in this respect the "Schildlaus" (Lecanium) has made great inroads and is doing much damage. The tendency of the Yugoslav prune tree to grow tall and spindling instead of sturdy and relatively low makes this infestation with "Schildlaus" a very serious problem. This insect resembles the Oyster Shell Bark Louse, except that it is round and much larger than the latter, states Mr. Newhouse.

In order to combat the "Schildlaus" the government and the municipalities accumulated a fund of $40,000 with which spraying machinery and materials have been purchased. The spraying is made available to the peasants at cost. Spraying is done with a hand-pump barrel machine provided with an extension rod. The operator climbs the tree in order to reach all parts. The method is entirely inadequate but it is the best that can be done in Yugoslavia under present conditions, according to Mr. Newhouse.

Another problem affecting the prune industry of Yugoslavia is the general practice of starting new plantings by the use of root-suckers dug up from hedge rows. The Yugoslav peasant has persistently refused to supply himself at cost with the grafted trees offered by the state nurseries. The drought experienced in the past two years, however, has provided an excellent

object lesson to those who doubt the value of using grafted trees. Trees grafted onto the "Green Gage" have developed a much larger and deeper root system and have held their fruit well while the native, ungrafted trees, with their smaller and shallow root system dropped a third of their fruit. The severe losses of last summer are due at least partly to this fact, states Mr. Newhouse.

Yugoslavia regulates trade in prunes

Declining markets and financial losses incurred by the Yugoslav prune trade because of inferior quality have brought the question of strict supervision of exports to a head. While elaborate plans for improving the quality of the Yugoslav prune through Government regulation and Market Commissions have been in existence for a number of years, it was not until this past year that the official regulations were enforced. The situation in regard to the quality of the Yugoslav prunes was particularly aggravating during the crop years, 1927 and 1928, which were unusually dry. The prunes as a result did not possess good drying qualities, but this condition was not apparent from outside appearances. No prunes are now allowed to leave the Kingdom for export unless they have passed the inspection of the Market Commissions. If the quality is satisfactory, an official certificate of quality is issued. See Foreign Service report on Prunes, P-65 entitled "Yugoslavia Regulates Trade in Prunes and Plum Jam".

Exportable surplus for 1928 will show decline

After having interviewed practically all the leading prune packers and exporters in Yugoslavia, Mr. Newhouse is of the opinion that the 1928 crop will not exceed 2,500 cars of 22,000 pounds each. Some factors place the final tonnage as low as 2,000 cars but the figure has fairly well crystalized at 2,500 cars. The Yugoslav exportable prune surplus in normal years amounts to approximately 5,000 cars. The causes for the reduced tonnage in Yugoslavia for 1928 are largely the drought of last summer, which caused fruit to drop off the trees, and the damage done by the "Schildlaus", (Lecanium) which has spread with alarming rapidity. Moreover the neighboring countries had only small fresh fruit crops in 1928 and as a result larger quantities of fresh prunes than usual were shipped from Yugoslavia. Another factor contributing to the lower exportable surplus for 1928 is the fact that large quantities of dried prunes were put into prune jam and prune brandy in the outlying districts away from the prune buying centers.

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FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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NEW AUSTRO-YUGOSLAV TREATY AGREEMENT TO AFFECT AMERICAN PRUNE EXPORTERS

The concession granted Yugoslavia by Austria reducing rates on dried prunes in the Commercial Treaty recently concluded between those two countries is of special interest to American exporters because of the fact that the United States is on a most-favored-nation basis with both Austria and Yugoslavia, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Milton J. Newhouse, Consulting Specialist of the Bureau, who is now making a study of the prune situation in European countries. This treaty has already been ratified by the Parliaments of both countries but it will not go into effect until the formal exchange of ratifications has taken place.

Both parties to the treaty took advantage of the occasion to introduce higher conventional rates on various products, Austria chiefly on agricultural products and Yugoslavia mainly on manufactured goods. At the same time both countries made a number of tariff concessions. Among these is the elimination on the part of Yugoslavia of the export tax of $3.75 per carload of ten tons on prunes in bags. Austria in turn agrees to admit bulk prunes or prunes in bags free of duty and materially reduces the present rates on packed prunes.

The rates provided for in the new treaty and the rates at present in force are given in the following tabulation.

Austrian tariff rates on Yugoslav prunes

Description of pack	Present rates		New rates	
	Gold crowns per 100 kilos	Dollars per 100 pounds	Gold crowns per 100 kilos	Dollars per 100 pounds
In bulk or in packages of 50 kilos or more gross weight	6	0.55	free	free
In packages under 50 kilos gross weight .	8	0.73	2.50	0.23

Source: Commercial Attache H. Lawrence Groves, Vienna.

Elimination of Yugoslav export tax blow to packers

The decision on the part of Yugoslavia to remove the export tax on prunes shipped in bags has been a blow to the prune packing industry of the country. With only twenty of the thirty-six packing plants in the Kingdom operating, and these not up to full capacity, the question of the shipment of bulk prunes or prunes in bags has been one of serious concern both to the Government and to the prune packers. The prune packing industry in Yugoslavia is not only dwindling away but the reputation of the Yugoslav prune is said to be greatly injured by the packing methods employed in some markets. It was to stimulate the domestic packing industry that certain interests about five years ago demanded a heavy export tax on prunes shipped out in bulk or in bags. A tax of 250 dinars ($3.75) per carload of ten tons was finally agreed upon. This tax did not materially reduce the bulk exports of Yugoslavian prunes but the prune packers felt that it was at least a beginning toward bringing the industry back to its one time thriving proportions.

The elimination of this export tax represents a victory to the prune industry at large as Austria is one of the most important markets for the Yugoslav prune exports. The new Austrian duty of 2.50 gold crowns per 100 kilos (23 cents per 100 pounds) on boxed prunes still makes it possible for the packers of Vienna to compete with the packers in Yugoslavia. The latter had hoped that the Austrian duty on boxed stock would be reduced to 1 or 1.5 gold crowns per 100 kilos (9 cents or 13 cents per 100 pounds). The entire elimination of the Austrian duty on bulk prunes or prunes in bags, on the other hand, will greatly stimulate the Austrian demand for such prunes.

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February 20, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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YUGOSLAVIA DEVELOPING CONTINENTAL MARKETS FOR FRESH PRUNES

There seems to be a growing demand in the markets of Central Europe for fresh prunes from Yugoslavia, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Milton J. Newhouse, Consulting Specialist of the Bureau, who is making a study of the prune situation in European countries. It is now quite apparent that the reduction in the tonnage of dried prunes available for export in Yugoslavia during the 1927-28 season was due in part to the shipment of fresh prunes. This development is being watched by the fresh fruit trade of Continental Europe with considerable interest since it will materially extend the span of the year when fresh prunes are available on the market.

There are several factors that are contributing to the development of the European market for Yugoslav fresh prunes. Probably the most important of these are the improved methods of packing. Until recently baskets were used almost exclusively. These, however, did not lend themselves to proper shipping, and ventilation was provided only in a limited way. Last season slatted crates were introduced. These pack much better in the cars and permit more ventilation and better cooling. The crate used is narrorer at the bottom than at the top, thus removing the pressure somewhat from the lower layers of fruit.

Another factor contributing to the development of the Continental market for fresh prunes from Yugoslavia is the fact that cars loaded with fresh prunes may now be attached to the regular passenger trains which very materially lessens the period of transit. Under these arrangements Yugoslav fresh prunes can reach Vienna in 24 hours, Berlin in 36 hours and Copenhagen in 48 hours. Fruit shipped in that manner last season reached its destination in excellent condition, according to Mr. Newhouse.

A standard gage railroad is now being completed into some of the best prune growing areas in Yugoslavia and this is expected to greatly facilitate the marketing of fresh prunes. A narrow gage railroad is being built across the country to the Adriatic and this will relieve the roads of much of the wheat shipments allowing lines and equipment to be used for the shipment of prunes. The prune growers themselves are enthusiastic about the prospects of developing the Continental market for fresh prunes. Marketing of fresh prunes not only eliminates the work and cost of drying and shipping in the dried state, but prices paid for fresh prunes last season gave a greater profit than was realized from the dried product, according to Mr. Newhouse.

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February 26, 1929.

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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CONTINUED DECLINE IN FRENCH PRUNE INDUSTRY EXPECTED

The decline noted in the prune growing industry of southern France since the War is expected to continue for some time, according to a report just received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Milton J. Newhouse, Consulting Specialist of the Bureau, who is making a study of the prune situation in European countries. A tour of the principal producing areas in southern France has shown that the main reason for this decline must be attributed to the failure of growers to replace trees which, through age and neglect, were no longer profitable, according to Mr. Newhouse. The damage to trees through continual neglect, while not apparent at first, is irreparable.

The prune growing industry in southern France has not been conducted along the lines of a specialized industry as in California, states Mr. Newhouse. On the contrary, the trees are planted as the boundary lines separating the many small farms. It is now very common to see large gaps in these rows of trees and no attempt seems to have been made to fill these gaps with young trees. While the trees in general are well shaped and show considerable care in pruning, there is no evidence of spraying and most of the trees are heavily covered with moss. The future of the prune industry in a situation such as noted, where the trees are apparently all of the same age, in the same condition of neglect as far as spraying is concerned, and where no young trees have been planted to replace old stock, must be self evident.

The authorities in the prune districts of southern France give several reasons for the decline of the prune industry in that area. The principal reason for the general failure to plant young trees since the War is said to be the fact that many of the former owners of the small farms have moved to the cities. The tenants naturally will not plant prune trees and wait twenty years for results. They must plant crops which show immediate results. Another contributing factor advanced is the increasing use of farm machinery. The introduction of farm machinery is said to have resulted in the removal of many prune trees because they interferred with the use of the machines. The settlement of Italian farmers in the prune growing areas is also claimed to have contributed toward the decline in the prune industry. The Italians have specialized more on truck gardening than on horticulture. Lack of available capital is also advanced as a material factor in the decline of the French prune industry. The impartial investigator, however, realizes that while all of these factors are important, the fundamental reason is the fact that competing areas since the War have placed upon the French markets large quantities of high quality prunes and other dried fruits at relatively low prices.

The depletion of man power on the farms of southern France during and as a result of the War materially affected the French prune industry because of the resulting neglect of the prune trees. Simultaneous with this neglect of the French prune trees, the prune producers in Oregon and California expanded their orchards at a rapid rate. These plantings are now coming into full bearing. The prune interests in both France and Yugoslavia are now finding it extremely difficult to rehabilitate their prune industries because of the fact that Oregon and California can produce prunes on such an enormous scale and of such a uniformly good grade and can sell them in Europe at such low prices.

The Government of France, upon the suggestion of the French prune interests, has resorted to various measures to revive the prune industry. Considerable educational work has been carried on with growers. At one time an attempt was even made to make it illegal to take out a prune tree without replacing it with a young tree. The import duty on prunes has also been increased, (see Foreign Service release, F.S./P-51, April 12, 1928).

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February 27, 1929.

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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SPANISH CONSUMPTION OF AMERICAN PRUNES INCREASING

Paradoxical as it may seem, Spain, one of the most important fruit producing areas of Europe, has been consuming an ever increasing quantity of American dried prunes, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Milton J. Newhouse, Consulting Specialist of the Bureau who is making a study of the prune situation in European countries. Although the Spanish consumption of American dried prunes is still relatively small compared with such countries as England and Germany, the United States exports to Spain have increased from 115,000 pounds in 1922 to 1,282,000 pounds in 1928.

The main reason for the increasing demand for American prunes in the Spanish market has been the excellence of the American pack and the inherent quality of the American prune, states Mr. Newhouse. The careful grading, packing and inspection of American prunes and the consequent uniformity and dependability of the pack has made a very favorable impression on the Spanish consumer. In the last year or two American prunes packed in Hamburg have been offered in Spain but the Spanish trade is of the opinion that the quality of these prunes is not so good as the original pack imported from California. Spain also imports some prunes from Yugoslavia and France, but imports from Yugoslavia are negligible and those from France are declining. The prunes imported from France come from Bordeaux, where they are packed by a special process. They consist either of French prunes or of prunes imported into France in bags and repacked in Bordeaux. These French packed prunes rule considerably higher in price than those imported from the United States, according to Mr. Newhouse.

Until a comparatively short time ago dried prunes were used in Spain almost exclusively as a dressing in stuffed turkeys. Medical authorities in the past few years, however, have been advocating the consumption of prunes for health reasons. As a result prunes are now used in many ways but particularly in dessert and stewed form, notwithstanding the fact that native fresh fruits of all kinds can be purchased at all times of the year. The sweet varieties of prunes are preferred in the Spanish market and they are usually served in a thick syrup. The words "Santa Clara" seem to have a special appeal to the Spanish people and this brand is generally asked for.

The following table gives the United States exports of prunes to Spain from 1922 to 1928:

PRUNES: Exports from the United States to Spain

Calendar year	Quantity	Calendar year	Quantity
	Pounds		Pounds
1922	115,000	1926	321,000
1923	256,000	1927	856,000
1924	140,000	1928	1,281,735
1925	303,000		

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March 6, 1929

THE PRUNE MARKET SITUATION IN LONDON AND HAMBURG

London

The British spot market for dried prunes at the present time is steady, according to a cable received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. Edwin Smith, the Department's Fruit Specialist in Europe. Forward orders are light and an accumulation of stocks indicates slow consumption, states Mr. Smith. The demand is weak, particularly in the country districts, due probably to the cold weather.

There is a scarcity of the large sizes, states Mr. Smith. Stocks on hand in London on February 28 were as follows: French 100 pounds, Servian 1,400 pounds, American 2,692,000 pounds, and Cape 129,000 pounds, or a total of approximately 1,411 short tons as compared with 1,369 short tons on January 31, 1,275 short tons at the end of February 1928, and 2,218 short tons at the end of February, 1927.

Hamburg

The demand for large count prunes in Hamburg showed some improvement during February, according to Agricultural Commissioner Steere in Berlin. Reports received in the Berlin office of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul General Ravndal at Hamburg indicate that some contracts were closed for March-April shipment of California stock. The Consul points out that while the Hamburg market seems to be conforming to the California quotations there is still some uncertainty as to the tendency.

Hamburg stocks on February 15 were as follows: California 5,290 short tons, Oregon-Washington 137 tons, Bosnian 311 tons, and Roumanian 44 tons, or a total of 5,782 short tons as compared with 5,147 short tons on January 15, and 4,525 short tons on February 15, 1928.

Imports into Germany

Imports of prunes, including removals from the Hamburg warehouses for distribution in Germany, during the five months September 1 to January 31, totaled 43,407,000 pounds as against 27,213,000 pounds during the corresponding period last season. The United States supplied 82 per cent of the imports thus far this season and Yugoslavia 18 per cent.

PRUNES: Imports into Germany, by months, September 1927 to January 1929

Year and month	United States	Yugoslavia	Total imports
	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds	1,000 pounds
1927-28			
Sept	1,180	144	1,419
Oct	1,385	225	1,637
Nov	1,418	1,300	2,993
Dec	4,715	1,700	6,606
Jan	11,140	3,075	14,558
Total for five months	19,838	6,444	27,213
Feb	5,846	1,451	7,587
Mar	4,524	1,534	6,413
Apr	3,043	1,396	4,518
May	2,369	986	3,479
June	4,738	744	5,539
July	5,288	1,959	7,306
Aug	11,718	802	12,559
1928-29			
Sept	4,656	1,145	5,843
Oct	11,212	435	11,742
Nov	2,636	1,739	4,577
Dec	8,793	2,095	11,145
Jan a/	8,200	1,800	10,100
Total for five months	35,497	7,214	43,407

Compiled from Monatliche Nachweise über den Auswärtigen Handel Deutschlands.
a/ Preliminary figures received by cable.

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May 13, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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THE 1929 PRUNE D'ENTE SITUATION IN FRANCE

Unfavorable weather during March and April are believed to have caused considerable damage to the Prune d'Ente crop in the Lot-et-Garonne, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul Lucien Memminger at Bordeaux. After blossoming under good conditions during March the trees while still in flower were subjected to frosts during the early part of April which, it is stated, may have caused considerable damage. Some growers give very pessimistic reports as to the actual amount of damage done but more conservative estimates are to the effect that it is too early to form a definite opinion concerning the probable size of the crop.

The trade in French Prunes d'Ente during the first four months of 1929 was of minor importance. As a result of the small crop harvested last season, prices quoted for the small quantities available have been so high that buyers have shown no interest. Prices in all cases have been in excess of those quoted on California stock even including the duty. Present stocks of French Prunes d'Ente are estimated at from 250 to 350 short tons. Considerable quantities of California prunes are reported as being in the hands of packers, importers and dealers but no difficulty is anticipated as regards the absorption of these stocks. The consumption of American prunes is developing more and more in France, the excellence of the pack and the uniformity and dependability of the article having won for it increasing favor, states Consul Memminger.

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June 10, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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PRUNE CROP PROSPECTS IN YUGOSLAVIA FOR 1929

Reports on the 1929 Yugoslavia prune crop situation at the beginning of June indicate rather unfavorable prospects as a result of the recent unusually heavy dropping caused by scale or so-called "schildlaus", according to a cable received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from O. L. Dawson, Acting Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. The outlook in Bosnia is somewhat better than in Servia. The total fresh prune crop will not be any larger than that of the past season and the export surplus of dried prunes will probably be below 33,000 short tons. It is believed, however, that the exports of fresh prunes from certain areas this season will continue to increase, states Mr. Dawson. (See Foreign Service release, F.S./P-69, February 20, 1929.)

Old stocks of prunes in producing regions are very small, according to Mr. Dawson. No offers of new crop prunes have been made as yet in the German markets. Exporters are said to be viewing the market with considerable uncertainty. Second hand sales of Yugoslav prunes in Hamburg recently, however, rather confirm the reports as to crop prospects for the coming season, since prices were considered rather high compared with those last year and with the general level of prices during 1928-29.

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FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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SPANISH MARKET FOR CALIFORNIA PRUNES

American prunes are becoming increasingly popular in the Spanish market, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul F. A. Henry at Barcelona. Exports from the United States to Spain have increased from 115,000 pounds in 1922 to 1,282,000 pounds in 1928. Shipments during the first four months of 1929 amounted to 167,000 pounds, as against 107,000 pounds in the corresponding period last year. Prior to 1922 France was practically the only country from which Spain imported prunes. The first shipments of California prunes in 1922 gave such satisfactory results on account of the quality and lower price of the fruit, compared with the French article, that the trade has since increased steadily from year to year. It is now estimated that in spite of the efforts of the French packers to maintain their hold on the market, only about 10 per cent of the total now comes from that source.

Some years ago, when the prune supply was obtained entirely from France, this fruit was distinctly a luxury and was principally used at Christmas time for the stuffing of turkeys and for eating as a delicacy. With the introduction of the California prune at lower prices, their use has become much more general. Jugoslav prunes have recently made their appearance in Spain but have failed to gain ground, notwithstanding the fact that their price is approximately 15 per cent lower than that of the California product. Both taste and packing have been adjudged inferior by Spanish consumers. The French prune, however, is sold at prices which range from 25 per cent to 40 per cent higher than the California article. It is largely marketed in attractive tin containers of 1, 2, 4, and 10 pounds for which there has always been a certain demand. The California prune is sold entirely in bulk, but it is probable that there would also be a demand for attractive packages.

Local prices of prunes naturally vary with those in the producing markets, and still further uncertainty as regards Spanish prices is introduced by the question of exchange. This fact is particularly in evidence at present since at the beginning of the year the peseta was quoted at about 6.13 to the dollar and it is now about 7.03. Recent wholesale prices have varied from $2.55 to $3.12 per case of 25 pounds and retail prices from 13.5 cents to 19.3 cents per pound for standard sizes, which are 30-40's, 40-50's, and 50-60's, per pound. The larger sizes command a very slight premium.

Sales methods

The business in prunes is done almost exclusively through commission agents and at the present time several leading California concerns are represented in the Spanish market. A number of agents are trying to make connections with California exporters, states Consul Henry. The compensation of commission houses varies from 1½ per cent to 2 per cent, but the latter seems to be considered as a fair figure. One commission representative has been handling approximately 25 per cent of the business and seems likely to continue in this leading position. The usual terms of payment are by drafts at three days' sight with documents attached. This is considered generally satisfactory owing to the almost universally good condition in which the fruit has been received. Importers state, however, that as the goods generally arrive a considerable period after the documentation, there is no opportunity for inspection of shipment and they would prefer to inspect each shipment before accepting the drafts.

If regular and rapid steamship connections were available between California and Barcelona, there is no doubt that a material increase in the trade would take place, according to Consul Henry. At present, shipments by sea take far too long a time. The usual route is by rail to New York and thence by direct steamer to Barcelona. However, the expenses are naturally much greater this way and are said to add some 10 per cent to the total landed cost of the fruit.

Import duties

Duties on prunes are levied under item 1373 of the Spanish Customs tariff, which reads "Other dried or desiccated fruits, dates, and coconut meat without sugar or preparation", and prescribes a duty of 6 pesetas gold or $1.15 per 100 kilos. The duty is therefore moderate in comparison with the cost of the article.

Seasonal character of the demand

A peculiar feature of the Spanish prune trade is its seasonal character, as, according to dealers, 88 per cent of the total imports are sold and consumed between December 1 and January 15. As a result of this, the bulk of the orders are placed during the summer months and shipments begin to arrive in September. The reasons assigned for this condition are the increased consumption of prunes during the Christmas holiday period, the absence of fresh fruits except apples and oranges during that season, and their suitability as an article of cold weather diet. Probably with the increasing popularity of the prune, this seasonal feature will become less marked in the future, states Mr. Henry.

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June 13, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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PRUNE CROP PROSPECTS FOR 1929 IN YUGOSLAVIA UNCERTAIN

Estimates of the quantity of dried prunes that will be available for export from Yugoslavia this season have been reduced to 22,000 short tons, according to a cable received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Mr. O. L. Dawson, Acting Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. The export surplus had been previously estimated at not to exceed 33,000 short tons. (See Foreign Service release F.S./P-74, June 10, 1929). Brandy stocks in Yugoslavia are reported as normal, states Mr. Dawson.

Recent reports of material losses to the Yugoslav 1929 prune crop are justified on the basis of the serious infestation of the prune orchards in Yugoslavia with the "schildlaus", according to M. J. Newhouse, Consulting Specialist of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, who has just returned from an exhaustive study of the prune industry in Yugoslavia. As expected, the losses are most severe in the Valjevo district, which is the shipping point for nearly 75 per cent of the Serbian crop. Mr. Newhouse found the trees there very badly affected.

Reliable sources now place the 1929 tonnage from the Valjevo district at only 500 carloads of ten metric tons each compared with last year's light crop of 1,000, ten-ton carloads. Other districts in Serbia, however, report a larger yield than last year. Bosnia reports the outlook as favorable with a total of 1,500 carloads of ten tons each. However, shipments of fresh prunes from Bosnia have in the last few years become of very great importance and the growers and shippers in this district are looking forward to even greater shipments of fresh prunes for 1929.

The trade in Central Europe is not entirely of one opinion as to the possibility of greatly expanding the outlets for fresh prunes. The condition of the fresh fruit crops in Europe generally will unquestionably have a bearing on the demand for fresh prunes. The fresh fruit crops in Europe last year were far below normal.

Central Europe reports prune stocks entirely exhausted and as a result trading is very limited. Reports of short crops on the Pacific Coast leave the dried fruit trade uncertain as to the future but prices on Yugoslav prunes on the Hamburg market have stiffened, states Mr. Newhouse.

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June 20, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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"DATE" PRUNES SHOULD NOT BE MIXED WITH "OREGON PETITE" FOR BORDEAUX MARKET

The mixing of so-called "Date" prunes with the "Oregon French" or "Petite" prunes now shipped to the Bordeaux market in France may eventually wipe out the market which Oregon packers enjoy in that area, according to Mr. M. J. Newhouse, the Consulting Specialist of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics who has just returned from a study of the prune producing and consuming centers of Europe. The "Oregon French" or "Petite" prunes are very highly thought of in a few of the European consuming centers according to Mr. Newhouse. This is particularly true of the Bordeaux prune growing and packing center in southern France. This district has long been known for its fancy package output, comparatively large quantities being packed there in glass and other alaborate containers for the extra fancy prune trade the world over. Owing to the declining position of the French prune industry, foreign prunes have often been drawn upon to help fill this need. According to the trade in Bordeaux, the "Oregon French" prune is often used for this purpose and bag shipments of "Oregon French" prunes to Bordeaux have in recent years assumed comparatively large proportions.

With the development of the so-called "Date" prune, there has recently been a tendency for growers and packers to mix these two varieties of prunes with undesirable results as far as the Bordeaux market is concerned, states Mr. Newhouse. While both varieties are characteristically sweet prunes, the stone of the "Date" prune is large and coarse compared to the small, smooth stone of the "Oregon Petite". The general characteristics of the two varieties are not at all similar and without discussing the relative merits of the two types, it is imperative that as far as the Bordeaux market is concerned, the two types be kept separate. Unless this is done, the expanding Bordeaux market for the "Oregon Petite" will be a thing of the past.

In the opinion of Mr. Newhouse the word "Petite", which in French means small, should be dropped and the designation "French" or "Oregon French" used instead. The prune grown in France is generally looked upon in Europe as being of highest quality and the Oregon growers of the French prune should take advantage of this fact, states Mr. Newhouse.

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July 2, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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MARKET FOR AMERICAN PRUNES IN COLOGNE, GERMANY

The Cologne area in Germany offers a good market for American prunes and other dried fruits, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul J. K. Huddle at Cologne. Cologne is an important fruit distributing center for Western Germany. Considerable quantities of fresh fruits, especially of apples, pears, cherries, peaches and apricots, are grown just south of Cologne and these control the market from July to January but dried fruits are in good demand from January to June. The consumption of both fresh and dried fruits is expanding, states Mr. Huddle. The Pacific Coast and Yugoslavia supply practically all of the prunes consumed in the Cologne area. Negligible quantities are received from Bulgaria, Austria and Rumania.

Competition

The demand for dried prunes and dried fruit in general usually declines as soon as fresh fruits and vegetables come on the market. Conversely, dried fruits should be in retailers' hands as soon as fresh vegetables and fresh fruits become scarce, that is from December to June. The demand for dried fruit in general was unusually keen throughout the season just ending due to the failure of last year's apple crop. Sales are still being effected in considerable volume because of the short vegetable crop resulting from the severe winter which retarded crops.

Hamburg versus original pack

American prunes are purchased either from the Hamburg repackers or directly from American shippers, but most of the business is handled by the former. Prunes originally packed in California, and Oregon are recognized as superior in quality to those packed in Hamburg, and are preferred by the trade but certain trading advantages have given the final preference to the Hamburg pack. The quality of the Hamburg pack is satisfactory in general, although recognized as inferior to that of prunes packed in Oregon and California. The price is generally lower than that of prunes packed in the United States. The possibility of purchasing fresh supplies at all times, of the sizes wanted and in small lots, however, is perhaps the principal factor that accounts for the extensive sale of the Hamburg pack. Wholesalers as a rule purchase only to cover current requirements and never hold large stocks. The easy terms and credit available, together with delivery on consignment or on a commission basis, must also be mentioned as factors helping to further the sale of Hamburg packed prunes. Hamburg packers grant wholesalers in the Cologne area from thirty to sixty days credit. Wholesalers in turn grant credit of the same duration to retailers.

Yugoslav prunes

The Yugoslav prunes shipped into the Cologne area are generally of satisfactory quality, states Mr. Huddle. Sixty days credit is usually granted to wholesalers of good financial standing. Yugoslav prunes are quoted c.i.f. Cologne. In general, Yugoslav prunes are smaller than the American varieties.

Quality, grade and pack

The quality of the Oregon and California prunes marketed in the Cologne area has always been found satisfacotry, states Consul Huddle. American prunes are sold by size, the size ranging from 30/40's to 90/100's. The medium counts, however, are preferred. As regards quality in general dealers look for moisture in fruit, keeping quality regularity of pack and appearance of the fruit. A bluish-black color is preferred. Fancy paper is not demanded or particularly desired as an indication of quality. Boxes of 12½ kilos (27½ pounds) are the preferred packing for the Cologne market, according to Mr. Huddle.

Advertising

In general the consuming trade in the Cologne market is not aware of the food value received when dried fruits are purchased, states Consul Huddle. Instructive advertising along general lines would unquestionably accelerate the steadily growing demand for dried fruit. Advertising has been done in Germany for fresh fruit with good results but practically nothing has been done along this line for dried fruits. Trade marks would be a great advantage in that they would facilitate sales by enabling retailers to feel sure of getting just what they have ordered, states Mr. Huddle. One of the characteristics of the Cologne dried fruit market is that practically all of the dried fruit marketed is displayed and sold in bulk. Packages are unknown, consumers preferring to assure themselves, by inspection, of the quality of the goods purchased.

Trade promotion factors

In order to stimulate the direct purchase of California and Oregon packed prunes, the first requisite would be to arrange for more easy terms of payment and for prompt delivery, states Mr. Huddle. Furthermore the American shippers would do well to accept orders for small lots and comply to a greater extent than before to the wishes of buyers in respect to the various types and qualities in demand. The wholesalers in Germany must grant credit to retailers on account of the shortage of liquid capital. The Hamburg packers have long recognized the necessity of giving every possible assistance to the wholesalers and as a result they are doing a very good business. If American packers could offer wholesalers in Cologne the same advantages available in the case of purchases from the Hamburg packers a large increase could undoubtedly be effected in direct shipments from the United States.

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FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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MARKET FOR DRIED PRUNES IN ITALY

Although Italy is an important exporter of fruits, the country depends to a large extent upon Yugoslavia and the United States for its dried prune requirements, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul W. C. Jones at Rome. The domestic production of dried prunes during the four years 1924-1927 averaged 1,687,000 pounds annually. Imports during the same period averaged 6,756,000 pounds annually. Yugoslavia as a rule supplies from 60 to 65 per cent of the total imports and the United States from 30 to 35 per cent of the total.

There has been a steady expansion in the Italian market for prunes during the past seven years, imports having increased from 5,689,000 pounds in 1922 to 14,446,000 pounds in 1928. Since the Italian demand for dried prunes is increasing so rapidly, efforts are being made to increase the domestic output. Owing to the length of time required for the development of a profitable industry, however, it will be some years before a domestic trade of any consequence can be established. According to present indications, any such development would still fall far short of keeping pace with the demand, states Consul Jones. It seems, therefore, that a very good opportunity exists in Italy for American prune producers and exporters to supply an increasing proportion of the Italian prune requirements.

At the present time four general types of dried prunes are being sold on the Italian market, according to Mr. Jones. These are the "Prugne Lunghe" (long prunes), "Prugne Tonde" (round prunes), "Californian" and "Bosnian". Of these four general types, the California are universally recognized as superior because of their quality, tenderness and cleanliness. The relatively high prices at which they are being offered to the public militate against their more extensive consumption. The "Californian" prunes are followed in popularity by the "Bosnian". It is claimed that one reason why the "Bosnian" prunes enjoy such a heavy sale is because the kernel of the fruit is small and may be easily removed. This factor is one of utmost importance because of the fact that by far the largest proportion of the Italian consumption of dried prunes is in the raw state, that is, in the dried stage and not stewed as is the custom in the United States.

Local preference for dried prunes from which the pits may easily be removed is worthy of special consideration on the part of American exporters, states Mr. Jones. Since the stewing of prunes would require the addition of a certain amount of sugar and a certain consumption of gas for cooking, the cost of preparing the fruit is rather high for the average consumer, that is, the middle class. Consequently, the variety of fruit for which the largest potential market exists is for the clean and choice brands from which the kernels are easily separated. In this connection the trade reports that the prunes of Italian production must be stewed as they are generally very dry

when packed for sale, necessitating their being soaked in warm water and thoroughly washed several times before they are ready for consumption.

According to the Italian Customs Tariff the general rate on prunes is gold lire 15.00 per quintal, ($1.30 per 100 pounds) but under treaty provisions this commodity may be imported from Yugoslavia at only gold lire 2.00 per quintal (17.5 cents per 100 pounds). However, since the "Treaty on Commerce and Navigation of 1871", concluded between Italy and the United States, contains the most favored nation treatment, this lower rate of duty is likewise applicable to American prunes. In addition to the foregoing, there is also an "octroi" or municipal tax on prunes imported into Rome, that amounts to $1.43 per 100 pounds on the "Californian" and "Bosnian" brands, and 45 cents per 100 pounds on the round and long varieties, states Consul Jones.

Dried prunes retailing in the Rome consular district are usually packed in small wooden boxes lined with an oily type of paper, and they are available in three sizes, holding about 33, 55 and 110 pounds, states Consul Jones. However, the trade prefers the small and medium containers because they are more easily handled, do not require much window space, and necessitate a smaller investment. Regarding the local market, the latter factor is very important as Rome is largely a city of retail store as a consequence of which the owners prefer to make the minimum amount of purchases and a quick turnover.

The following table gives the imports of dried prunes into Italy during the past seven years:

DRIED PRUNES: Imports into Italy, 1922-1928

Year	Quantity	Year	Quantity
	Pounds		Pounds
1922	5,688,800	1926	7,052,300
1923	6,543,600	1927	8,985,500
1924	4,132,500	1928	14,445,600
1925	7,052,200		

Source: Consul W. O. Jones, at Rome.

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July 10, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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YUGOSLAV PRUNE CROP DEVELOPMENTS TO JUNE 30

Prospects for the Yugoslav prune crop in 1929 are very bad because of the unexpected severity of the damage from insect scale (Schildlaus) and the weakening of the trees as a result of last year's drought and the severe frosts experienced during the past winter, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from O. L. Dawson, Acting Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. While it was feared early in the spring that the trees were somewhat damaged by the hot weather last summer and by the frost during the past winter, the possible effect of these factors disappeared entirely when a magnificent, though greatly delayed, blossoming gave every indication of a good crop. While some dropping was expected because of the heavy blossoming, it was generally agreed that the prospects in Servia were for a medium crop and in Bosnia for a good crop.

Less favorable reports began to come in early in June, however, indicating that dropping was much heavier than had been anticipated. It was also observed that the infestation of the trees bearing the drying variety, Hungarian plums, by insect scale, was very extensive. All estimates, nevertheless, indicated that the exportable surplus would run from 29,700 short tons to 33,000 short tons of dried prunes, as the trees along the Drina and in the mountainous districts of Tchatohak-Uzice and Bosnia, very important producing districts, still promised a very good crop. a/

Reports around the tenth of June indicated that the situation was steadily becoming worse. Insect-scale damage (Lecanium Corni, Schildlaus) was even more extensive than feared at the beginning of the month and it was reported that the infestation involved most of the trees from Brcko down to Valjevo. Little or nothing had been done to combat this pest during the winter and spring, due largely perhaps to the fact that weather conditions prevented an effective campaign. Further dropping of unusual extent continued. This dropping was generally attributed to the scale infestation, but some people expressed the opinion that last year's drought and the severe frosts during the past winter also accounted for some share of the dropping, although this was not brought out in earlier reports. Trade estimates of the export surplus of dried prunes around June 10 were therefore very uncertain and ranged from 16,500 to 27,500 short tons. The most reliable figure which could be given at that time was around 22,000 short tons, as there seemed to be some tendency to exaggerate the unexpected turn in prospects. b/

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a/ See Foreign Service release, F.S./P-74
b/ See Foreign Service release, F.S./P-76.

This development was a great disappointment to all observers, since they had generally agreed that the abundant blossoming gave prospects for a good crop. Conservative estimates of the exportable surplus on June 20 ranged from 19,800 to 22,000 short tons of dried prunes, assuming that weather conditions would be favorable. a/ It was stated that not too hot weather, with sufficient rains, would be required to realize this estimate. Excessive heat and lack of moisture would considerably reduce the estimated surplus as the trees already weakened by the scale infestation, and to some extent by last year's drought and the past winter's severe frosts, could not resist to the extent of normal years. The hot summer winds will be particularly dangerous.

The above estimate of 19,800 to 22,000 short tons of dried prunes takes into consideration, aside from favorable weather to the harvest, a certain amount of prunes to be exported fresh and the "slivovitz" situation. It is thought that the share of the fruit exported as fresh plums will show a further increase this season as last year's returns were very favorable, states Mr. Dawson. The "slivovitz" situation favors the estimate of the dried prune surplus above given as the early varieties of plums show very little scale damage and the crop from these trees will be sufficient to produce all the brandy required. Furthermore, the high tax recently imposed on "slivovitz" by Servia will reduce the comsumption of prune brandy as well as the net returns to producers. The general opinion is that the price of "slivovitz" is too low to warrant the use of "Hungarian plums" for brandy production. This variety will therefore be used exclusively for drying and for producing plum butter, according to the trade. Brandy stocks at the present time are normal.

It should be noted that the fear has been expressed by the trade that the scale-infestation might develop into a permanent danger to Yugoslav prune production, as present measures of combating this pest are obviously inadequate, states Mr. Dawson.

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a/ See Foreign Service release, F.S./P-78.

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August 5, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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1929 PRUNE CROP PROSPECTS IN FRANCE AND YUGOSLAVIA

While it is still too early to make any predictions as to the 1929 Prune d'Ente crop in France because of the uncertainty of weather conditions between now and the harvest, it is the consensus of opinion that the 1929 crop will be much more abundant than that of 1928, according to a report received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul Lucien C. Memminger at Bordeaux. The 1928 crop is estimated at 922 short tons, one of the smallest ever obtained in the Prune d'Ente area. Some estimates place the 1929 crop at from 3,300 to 4,400 short tons.

The harvest should begin at about the usual time, around the end of August. No forecast can be made as yet relative to the quality of the new crop but it is believed that the proportion of large fruit will be small since the trees in the valleys which generally produce the large sizes are lacking in fruit this year. The trees in the uplands and hillsides, however, are well laden with fruit.

Yugoslavia

Estimates of the exportable surplus of dried prunes from Yugoslavia this season still range from 19,800 to 22,000 short tons, a large proportion of which is expected to be large sizes, according to a cable received from Mr. O. L. Dawson, Acting Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. The Yugoslavian market is very firm at the present time and offerings are small.

Business in old and new crop Yugoslav prunes in Hamburg is reported by Consul Kehl at that station as having been very quiet at the beginning of July but an active demand developed later in the month for Oregon and Washington stock. It is estimated that about 3,000 tons of new crop Oregon prunes were already contracted for on August 1. Supplies of old crop California prunes are small and transactions are limited owing to high quotations. There were no orders for new crop California prunes up to August 1, but the outlook was firm. The German inland trade was reserved at the beginning of July but showed more interest later. Quotations on new crop Yugoslav prunes, sizes 80/85, 95/100 and 100/120, c.i.f. Hamburg are averaging around $6.07 per 100 pounds.

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September 6, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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PRUNE MARKET SITUATION IN HAMBURG AND LONDON

The estimate of the exportable surplus of dried prunes from Yugoslavia remains unchanged according to a cable to the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Acting Agricultural Commissioner O. L. Dawson at Berlin. The latest information received placed the exportable surplus from 19,800 to 22,000 short tons. Prices increased sharply during August with a slight decline at the end of the month and trading remained quiet with offers restricted. A law introducing control of prune exports has been issued by the Yugoslavia government which the trade hopes will improve the quality of export prunes.

Hamburg -

Business in old and new crops of California, Washington and Oregon prunes in Hamburg was reported by Consul Kehl at that city to be large during August with prices on an upward trend but showing some slackening at the end of the month. Second hand business is also reported to be large with some contracts traded several times so that it is impossible to estimate the exact quantity contracted. Quotations on new crop Yugoslavia prunes, September-October delivery c.i.f. Hamburg were as follows:

Size	Price per 100 pounds Dollars
70- 75	8.60
80- 85	8.05
95-100	6.74
110-120	6.07

London -

The prune market in London remains firm according to a cable from Agricultural Commissioner Foley. California spot stocks are reported light and prices continue to advance. Prices of California new crop are advancing steadily but business is restricted. Oregons, where available, show an increase in the same ratio as those of California. Stocks of prunes in London on August 31 as reported by the London Dried Fruit Trade Association showed a total of 943 short tons compared with 1,331 short tons in July of this year. Stocks reported for August 31 last year were 681 short tons and in 1927 were 886 short tons.

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September 23, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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YUGOSLAV PRUNE SITUATION

The latest reports from producing centers in Yugoslavia confirm earlier estimates as to an export surplus of dried prunes for the 1928-29 season ranging from 19,800 to 22,000 short tons, according to a cable just received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from O. L. Dawson, Acting American Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin.

The exports of fresh prunes this year will be much smaller than expected. This would tend to raise the dried surplus, states Mr. Dawson. On the other hand the first samples of the new crop show a considerable preponderance of small sizes contrary to earlier expectations, which will tend to reduce somewhat the total tonnage available for export.

The first movement of the new crop in Bosnia reached the markets there on September 16. The first movement in Serbia reached the markets on September 21. Prices quoted on the small sizes were showing a downward tendency but large sizes were firm, states Mr. Dawson

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October 3, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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YUGOSLAV AND FRENCH PRUNE SITUATION

Yugoslavia

The 1929 dried prune export surplus of Yugoslavia is now placed at 19,800 short tons, according to a cable just received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from O. L. Dawson, Acting American Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. Heavy deliveries at the beginning of the season caused a temporary decline in prices but they have increased again recently. Transactions to date, however, have been small.

Consul Kehl at Hamburg reports that Yuglslav quotations c.i.f. Hamburg on September-October shipments have been as follows: sizes 80/85's, $8.15; 95/100's, $6.34 and 110/120's, $5.57 per 100 pounds, or an average of $6.68 per 100 pounds for the three sizes. "Mercantile" or very small sizes were offered at $5.34 per 100 pounds. Opening prices last year on 10-ton combinations of one third 80/85's, one third 95/100's and one third 110/120's averaged $4.84 per 100 pounds for the three sizes.

France

Exceptionally favorable weather during the ripening and drying periods in the French Prune, D'Ente district, has raised the prospects for the 1929 crop from the original estimate of 4,400 short tons to a present estimate of 5,500 short tons, according to Consul Lucien Memminger at Bordeaux. There was no rain and very little wind during August and as a result very few plums dropped from the trees. Moreover, the sugar content of the fruit is high and water content light and a large percentage of large sized prunes has been obtained in drying.

Harvesting and drying operations were completed at an early date this year because of the favorable weather conditions. All of the crop has now been harvested and a considerable proportion has been sold in regional markets. An authority has stated that the 1929 crop will yield an average of 60/70's per half kilo (1.1 pounds) as against 80/90 during recent years.

The market for new crop fruit is said to be very firm for small sizes but quiet for the large sizes. The tabulation on the next page gives the opening prices on French prunes this season and last season.

PRUNES: Opening price per 100 pounds at Lot et Garonne, 1928 and 1929

French sizes	1928	1929
	Dollars	Dollars
36/38	26.54	---
40/45	16.36	14.15
50/55	9.73	8.13
60/65	7.96	6.55
70/75	6.72	5.84
80/85	5.31	5.04
90/95	4.42	4.42
100/105	3.36	3.98

Source: Bordeaux Chamber of Commerce.

Prospects for American prunes

The French importers of American prunes are looking for a decrease in imports from the United States this year since California prices are high and the French crop is larger than last year. It is expected that the domestic consumption of prunes in France will be somewhat reduced during the 1929-30 season because of the large fresh fruit crops this year, especially of apples which can be carried over during the winter months. In addition some stocks of the 1928 California crop are still on hand in France. Very little interest is therefore being displayed for new crop American prunes. Prices quoted in France on Yugoslav prunes are high and the demand is light.

Hamburg market

The Hamburg business in old and new crop California, Oregon and Washington prunes was very quiet during September but prices are firm, according to Consul Kehl at that post. Second hand business has also been small with prices below first hand quotations.

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October 24, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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REVISED ESTIMATE OF FRENCH PRUNE CROP

The most generally accepted estimate for the 1929 prune crop in the Bordeaux area in trade circles is 3,850 short tons, according to a report just received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Consul Lucien Memminger at Bordeaux. Now that the crop has nearly all been sold from the regional markets, it is possible to obtain a more exact estimate than has previously been the case, states Mr. Memminger. A few weeks ago, when the crop was first appearing on the market, it was reported that the yield had been underestimated and that it would most likely amount to 5,500 short tons. This impression was obtained because of the heavy proportion of large size fruit. Since then, however, early predictions concerning damage by frost in April have been verified and it is found that the yield of the trees was greatly curtailed.

Prices quoted on French prunes have remained firm since the opening of the season, particularly for the medium sized fruit. Prices quoted on California prunes of similar sizes are somewhat higher than on the domestic grown fruit. The market demand at Bordeaux for foreign prunes is dull at the present time and local dealers do not expect much business in California prunes this year. This is due not only to the higher prices asked for California stock this year, but also to the abundant crop of fresh fruits in France, particularly of apples. It is also stated that fairly large stocks of California prunes are still on hand from last year.

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P-87

November 5, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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PRUNE MARKET CONDITIONS ABROAD

Yugoslav prune exports and prices

Estimates of the Yugoslav export surplus of dried prunes for 1929-30 now range from 8,800 to 15,400 short tons, according to a cable received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Agricultural Commissioner L. V. Steere at Berlin. An average of these figures, or 12,000 short tons, would seem to be the best approximation for the present, states Mr. Steere. The reduction from previous estimates was made necessary by the preponderance of small size plums. Yugoslav prune exports during the year ending August 31, 1921 amounted to 21,000 short tons.

The unsold stocks still in the hands of growers and dealers in Yugoslavia is very small. Shipments are going mostly to the countries along the upper Danube and to Italy and Poland. Prices advanced sharply during October and only a few transactions were negotiated.

YUGOSLAV PRUNES: Belgrade quotations, October 26, 1928 and October 3 and 26, 1929, per hundred pounds

Grade	1928	1929	
	October 26	October 3	October 26
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Garniture	4.07-4.15	6.07-6.23	6.79-7.18
80/85	5.19-5.27	7.50-7.66	8.06-8.38
110/120	3.03-3.19	5.39-5.51	5.83-6.23

Hamburg and London prune markets

Reports from Hamburg indicate that dealers are holding back in purchasing until a better inland demand develops. The demand in inland markets is now very light because of the high prices quoted on prunes and the abundant supply of fresh fruit. Yugoslavia is expected to be only a small factor in the Hamburg market this season because of the small crop, small sizes, and mediocre quality of the prunes.

In London California prunes continue in steady demand with quantity disposed of satisfactory for this time of year, according to a cable from F.A. Motz, fruit specialist of the Department in Europe. Prices remain approximately the same as last month on California prunes, but Oregon prunes show some reduction. Wholesale stocks of prunes in London on October 31 stood at 776 short tons against 944 on September 30, and 451 on October 31 last year.

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December 4, 1929

FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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PRUNE MARKET CONDITIONS ABROAD

Yugoslav prune exports and prices

Estimates of the Yugoslav export surplus of dried prunes for 1929-30 still range from 8,800 to 15,400 short tons, or an average of about 12,000 short tons, according to a cable received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics from Agricultural Commissioner L. V. Steere at Berlin. Yugoslav prune exports during the year ending August 31, 1929 amounted to 21,000 short tons.

Belgrade quotations on new crop prunes have declined somewhat since the end of October. Prices, however, are still considerably higher than at this time last season, as is evidenced by the following quotations.

YUGOSLAV PRUNES: Belgrade quotations on date specified, per hundred pounds

Grade	1928		1929		
	Oct 26	Nov 27	Oct 3	Oct 26	Nov 26
	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars	Dollars
Garniture	4.07-4.15	3.79-3.89	6.07-6.23	6.79-7.18	6.57-6.69
80/85 ...	5.19-5.27	4.71-4.79	7.50-7.66	8.06-8.38	7.85-8.01
110/120 ..	3.03-3.19	-	5.39-5.51	5.86-6.23	5.53-5.61

Germany

Consul General Kehl at Hamburg reports that business in California, Oregon and Washington prunes is very quiet. Prices declined generally during November. Second hand prices, on California stock particularly, are considerably below American quotations. Yugoslav prunes are being entirely neglected at the present time. Mr. Steere states the inland demand for prunes in Germany is low due to the warm weather and the abundance of fresh fruits. An improvement is expected in the demand as soon as cold weather sets in. Important arrivals of American prunes during December are expected and these may influence prices if buyers continue to hold off.

Great Britain

Some improvement has taken place in the prices paid for new crop California prunes in London, according to Mr. F. A. Motz, the Department's Fruit Specialist in Europe. The trade has expressed dissatisfaction at the increase in prices but since old crop prunes are unreliable transactions in new crop fruit are being affected at the prices asked. Shipments from Oregon continue to sell at attractive prices. The spot demand in Liverpool is improving. Prices there are steady and trading is quiet. Liverpool stocks are small. Wholesale stocks in London on November 30 stood at 836 short tons as against 776 on October 31 and 529 on November 30, 1928.

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FOREIGN NEWS ON PRUNES

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RELATIONSHIP OF ACTUAL DRIED PRUNE EXPORTS FROM YUGOSLAVIA TO ESTIMATED EXPORTABLE SURPLUS

An examination of the relationship between commercial estimates and actual exports of dried prunes from Yugoslavia shows that in most seasons the estimates made after August 1 are a fairly reliable indication of the quantities available for the export trade. The first crop forecasts for prunes in Yugoslavia are now made in May or June after the critical blossom period has past and the fruit is known to have set. Serious damage, however, may be suffered after that date by unfavorable climatic factors, by insects and by disease. Prune merchants therefore hold regular meetings during the growing season in order to keep themselves informed of the export prospects. On September 1 the prune merchants from all parts of the country meet in Belgrade and give reports as to prune prospects.

Estimates of the dried prune export surplus of Yugoslavia have been received in the Foreign Service of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics in recent years through the office of the American Agricultural Commissioner at Berlin. The table following shows the relationship between the estimated exports and actual exports during the four crop years 1925-26 to 1928-29. It will be noted that the August and September estimates may be taken as reasonably indicative of the export movement for the season. Actual exports during 1928-29 were considerably below the estimates of the trade. Several factors account for this difference. Dropping was unusually heavy and considerable damage was suffered because of the Schildlaus. Moreover the neighboring countries had only small fresh fruit crops in 1928 and as a result large quantities of prunes were shipped out of the country in fresh rather than dried form.

YUGOSLAV PRUNES: Comparison of estimated with actual exports

Season	Early estimate a/	Final estimate b/	Actual exports (Sept to Aug)
	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons
1925-26	44,000 to 55,000	44,000	48,400
1926-27	44,000 to 50,000	49,600	51,900
1927-28	30,000	c/	34,000
1928-29	35,000 to 38,500	27,500	20,800
1929-30	19,800 to 22,000	d/ 8,800 to 15,400	---

a/ Made in August and September.
b/ Usually in February.
c/ None received.
d/ Latest received to date. Schildlaus damage, heavy dropping and preponderance of small sizes made reduction in early estimates necessary.

The Yugoslav prune shipping season starts toward the end of September. Shipments by months show that Yugoslavia usually ships heavily from October to March but the seasonal movement varies greatly from year to year depending upon the size of the prune crop. The following table gives the Yugoslav exports of dried prunes by months during the last seven seasons.

DRIED PRUNES: Exports from Yugoslavia by months, seasons 1922-23 to 1928-29

Month	1922-23	1923-24	1924-25	1925-26	1926-27	1927-28	1928-29
	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons	Short tons
Sept	524	1,390	170	2,988	3,436	1,650	299
Oct	7,828	17,854	2,843	20,355	20,547	11,603	7,664
Nov	12,984	11,284	1,329	9,258	12,035	7,636	6,383
Dec	7,315	14,976	478	5,304	5,464	4,306	3,674
Jan	6,526	7,690	18	3,291	3,964	1,486	1,118
Feb	4,374	4,594	13	1,898	1,792	4,023	550
Mar	5,106	3,029	24	2,001	2,125	1,592	331
Apr	3,361	1,451	1	1,845	1,788	676	459
May	4,105	235	11	1,044	582	696	11
June	2,142	(a/ 94	69	334	68	121	-
July	1,481	(	b/	51	51	100	-
Aug	585	17	24	67	19	144	268
Total	56,331	62,664	4,980	48,436	51,871	34,033	20,757

Compiled from reports of American Consul at Belgrade Quoting official sources.

a/ Interpolated.
b/ Not available.

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